

# Health Alert

October 31, 2001

**FROM: MAUREEN E. DEMPSEY, M.D.  
DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: Use of Ciprofloxacin or Doxycycline for Postexposure  
Prophylaxis for Prevention of Inhalational Anthrax**

The Department of Health and Senior Services is forwarding the attached information from CDC. Please contact the Department if you have any questions at 1-800-392-0272.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO WIDELY DISTRIBUTE THIS UPDATE TO PHYSICIANS,  
EMERGENCY MEDICINE DIRECTORS, URGENT CARE CENTERS AND  
INFECTION CONTROL PRACTITIONERS.**

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**DHSS DISTRIBUTION LIST:** Local Public Health Agency Administrators, State Emergency Management Agency, Department of Public Safety, Missouri Hospital Association

**CDC**

CENTERS FOR  
DISEASE CONTROL  
AND PREVENTION



**FROM: Maureen E. Dempsey, M.D.**  
**Director**  
**Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services**

**SUBJECT: Health Alert 24: Use of Ciprofloxacin or Doxycycline for Postexposure Prophylaxis for Prevention of Inhalational Anthrax**

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Distributed via the Health Alert Network  
October 31, 2001, 13:45 EST (1:45 PM, EST)  
CDCHAN-00049-01-10-31-ADV-N

**Official CDC Health Advisory: USE OF CIPROFLOXACIN OR DOXYCYCLINE FOR POSTEXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS FOR PREVENTION OF INHALATIONAL ANTHRAX**

Interim recommendations, MMWR 50(no 41):893 Oct 19,2001 and MMWR 50(no 42):909 Oct 26, 2001, for postexposure prophylaxis to prevent inhalational anthrax after exposure to *B. anthracis* spores recommend ciprofloxacin or doxycycline as initial therapy in situations associated with the current bioterrorist attack in the United States.

**EFFECTIVENESS:** There is no evidence which demonstrates that ciprofloxacin is more or less effective than doxycycline for postexposure prophylaxis for prevention of infection with *B. anthracis*

**RESISTANCE:** Widespread use of any antibiotic will promote resistance. Many common pathogens are already resistant to tetracyclines such as doxycycline. However, ciprofloxacin resistance is not yet common in these same organisms. To preserve the effectiveness of ciprofloxacin against other infections, use of doxycycline for prevention of *B. anthracis* infection is reasonable. Ciprofloxacin is an effective antimicrobial for a variety of other bacterial infections. Thus, the wide use of this drug in thousands of individuals may lead to increased resistance of other bacterial pathogens to ciprofloxacin and other fluroquinolones, and limit the usefulness of these agents.

**SIDE EFFECTS:** On the basis of side-effect profiles (see below), the history of reactions, or the clinical setting, either doxycycline or ciprofloxacin may be preferable for an individual patient.

Patient Information:  
Ciprofloxacin 500 mg  
ORAL TABLET 55000

This drug belongs to a class of drugs called quinolone antibiotics. You have been given this drug for protection against possible exposure to an infection-causing bacteria. This drug prevents:

\* Anthrax

You have been provided a limited supply of medicine. Local emergency health workers or your healthcare provider will inform you if you need more medicine after you finish this supply. If so, upon your follow-up visit, you will be told how to get more medicine. You will be told if no more medicine is needed. You may also be switched from this medicine to a different medicine based on laboratory tests.

Take this medicine as prescribed: one tablet by mouth, two times a day.

Special dosing instructions for children can be found in the MMWRs referenced above.

Keep taking your medicine, even if you feel okay, unless your doctor tells you to stop. If you stop taking this medicine too soon, you may become ill.

You should take this medicine with a full glass of water. Drink several glasses of water each day while you are taking this medicine. It is best to take this medicine 2 hours after a meal. If it upsets your stomach, you may take it with food, but **DO NOT** take it with milk, yogurt, or cheese.

If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next regular dose, wait until then to take your medicine, and skip the missed dose. Do not take two doses at the same time.

**DRUGS AND FOODS TO AVOID:** Do not take the following drugs within 2 hours of taking Ciprofloxacin: antacids such as Maalox or Mylanta, vitamins, iron supplements, zinc supplements, or sucralfate (Carafate). You may take them 2 hours after or 6 hours before Ciprofloxacin. Also, make sure your doctor knows if you are taking asthma medicine like theophylline, gout medicine like probenecid (Benemid), or a blood thinner such as Coumadin.

Avoid drinking more than one or two caffeinated beverages (coffee, tea, soft drinks) per day. Avoid taking this medicine with foods containing large amounts of calcium, like milk, yogurt, or cheese.

**WARNINGS:** If you have epilepsy or kidney disease, or if you are pregnant, become pregnant, or are breastfeeding, notify emergency healthcare workers before you start taking this medicine.

Do not take this medicine if you have had an allergic reaction to ciprofloxacin or other quinolone medicines such as norfloxacin (Noroxin), ofloxacin (Floxin) or nalidixic acid (NegGram).

This medicine may make you dizzy or lightheaded. Avoid driving or using machinery until you know how it will affect you.

This medicine increases the chance of sunburn; make sure to use sunscreen to protect your skin.

**SIDE EFFECTS:** Call your doctor or seek medical advice right away if you are having any of these side effects: rash or hives; swelling of face, throat, or lips; shortness of breath or trouble breathing; seizures; or severe diarrhea. Less serious side effects include nausea, mild diarrhea, stomach pain, dizziness, and headache. Talk with your doctor if you have problems with these side effects.

Patient Information:  
DOXYCYCLINE 100 MG  
ORAL TABLET

This drug belongs to a class of drugs called tetracycline antibiotics. You have been given this drug for protection against possible exposure to an infection-causing bacteria. This drug prevents:

\* Anthrax

You have been provided a limited supply of medicine. Local emergency health workers or your healthcare provider will inform you if you need more medicine after you finish this supply. If so, upon your follow-up visit, you will be told how to get more medicine. You will be told if no more medicine is needed. You may also be switched from this medicine to a different medicine based on laboratory tests.

Take this medicine as prescribed: one tablet by mouth, two times a day.

Special dosing instructions for treatment of children under 8 years of age can be found in the above-referenced MMWRs.

Keep taking your medicine, even if you feel okay, unless your healthcare provider tells you to stop. If you stop taking this medicine too soon, you may become ill.

You may take your medicine with or without food or milk, but food or milk may help you avoid stomach upset.

If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next regular dose, wait until then to take your medicine, and skip the missed dose. Do not take two doses at the same time.

**DRUGS AND FOODS TO AVOID:** Do not take the following medicines within 2 hours of taking DOXYCYCLINE: antacids such as Maalox or Mylanta, calcium or iron supplements, cholestyramine (Questran) or colestipol (Colestid).

While you are taking this medicine, birth control pills may not work as well; make sure to use another form of birth control.

**WARNINGS:** If you have liver disease, or if you are or might be pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding, tell emergency healthcare workers before you start taking this medicine.

This medicine increases the chance of sunburn; make sure to use sunscreen to protect your skin.

Do not take this medicine if you have had an allergic reaction to any tetracycline antibiotics.

Women may have vaginal yeast infections from taking this medicine.

**SIDE EFFECTS:** Call your doctor or seek medical attention right away if you are having any of these side effects: skin rash, hives, or itching; wheezing or trouble breathing; swelling of the face, lips, or throat. Less serious side effects include diarrhea, upset stomach, nausea, sore mouth or throat, sensitivity to sunlight, or itching of the mouth or vagina lasting more than 2 days. Talk with your doctor if you have problems with these side effects.